

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN**

ORLANDO F. HILL,

Plaintiff,

v.

ERIC SEVERSON, ANGELA
WOLLENHUPT, and WAUKESHA
COUNTY JAIL,

Defendants.

Case No. 23-CV-1302-JPS

ORDER

Plaintiff Orlando F. Hill, an inmate confined at Racine Correctional Institution, filed a pro se complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983 alleging that the defendants violated his constitutional rights. ECF No. 1. This Order resolves Plaintiff's motions for leave to proceed without prepaying the filing fee and screens his complaint.

1. MOTIONS FOR LEAVE TO PROCEED WITHOUT PREPAYING THE FILING FEE

The Prison Litigation Reform Act ("PLRA") applies to this case because Plaintiff was a prisoner when he filed his complaint. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1915(h). The PLRA allows the Court to give a prisoner plaintiff the ability to proceed with his case without prepaying the civil case filing fee. *Id.* § 1915(a)(2). When funds exist, the prisoner must pay an initial partial filing fee. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1). He must then pay the balance of the \$350 filing fee over time, through deductions from his prisoner account. *Id.*

On January 18, 2024. the Court ordered Plaintiff to pay an initial partial filing fee of \$5.36. ECF No. 12. Plaintiff paid that fee on January 26, 2024. The Court will grant Plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed without

prepaying the filing fee. ECF No. 2. The Court will deny Plaintiff's second motion to proceed without prepayment of the filing fee, ECF No. 8, as moot. He must pay the remainder of the filing fee over time in the manner explained at the end of this Order.

2. SCREENING THE COMPLAINT

2.1 Federal Screening Standard

Under the PLRA, the Court must screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief from a governmental entity or an officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The Court must dismiss a complaint if the prisoner raises claims that are legally "frivolous or malicious," that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

In determining whether the complaint states a claim, the Court applies the same standard that applies to dismissals under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 12(b)(6). *See Cesal v. Moats*, 851 F.3d 714, 720 (7th Cir. 2017) (citing *Booker-El v. Superintendent, Ind. State Prison*, 668 F.3d 896, 899 (7th Cir. 2012)). A complaint must include "a short and plain statement of the claim showing that the pleader is entitled to relief." Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). The complaint must contain enough facts, accepted as true, to "state a claim for relief that is plausible on its face." *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007)). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows a court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556).

To state a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that someone deprived him of a right secured by the Constitution or

the laws of the United States and that whoever deprived him of this right was acting under the color of state law. *D.S. v. E. Porter Cnty. Sch. Corp.*, 799 F.3d 793, 798 (7th Cir. 2015) (citing *Buchanan-Moore v. County of Milwaukee*, 570 F.3d 824, 827 (7th Cir. 2009)). The Court construes pro se complaints liberally and holds them to a less stringent standard than pleadings drafted by lawyers. *Cesal*, 851 F.3d at 720 (citing *Perez v. Fenoglio*, 792 F.3d 768, 776 (7th Cir. 2015)).

2.2 Plaintiff's Allegations

Plaintiff names Defendants Sheriff Eric Severson ("Severson"), Jail Admin. Angela Wollenhupt ("Wollenhupt"), and Waukesha County Jail. ECF No. 1 at 1. He alleges that they failed to inform him/post warnings about the "radium/gross alpha levels" and failed to provide alternative purified/clean water. *Id.* at 2. Plaintiff was exposed to cancer as a result and his complaints were ignored from March 13, 2023 until August 17, 2023. *Id.* Plaintiff alleges "negligence, poor training, inattention to duty, indifference, discrimination, etc." *Id.* at 2–3.

2.3 Analysis

The Court finds that Plaintiff may not proceed on an Eighth Amendment conditions of confinement claim. A prisoner's claim of unconstitutional conditions of confinement is analyzed under the Eighth Amendment's cruel and unusual punishment clause. *See Farmer v. Brennan*, 511 U.S. 832, 834 (1994). A prisoner is entitled to live in conditions that do not amount to "punishment." *Bell v. Wolfish*, 441 U.S. 520, 535 (1979). Detainees are entitled to be confined under humane conditions that provide for their "basic human needs." *Rhodes v. Chapman*, 452 U.S. 337, 347 (1981). "The Constitution does not mandate comfortable prisons, but neither does it permit inhumane ones[.]" *Snipes v. DeTella*, 95 F.3d 586, 590 (7th Cir. 1996).

To establish a constitutional violation with respect to an inmate's living conditions, he must be able to demonstrate both: (1) the conditions were objectively so adverse that they deprived him "of the minimal civilized measure of life's necessities," and (2) the defendants acted with deliberate indifference with respect to the conditions. *Townsend v. Fuchs*, 522 F.3d 765, 773 (7th Cir. 2008) (quoting *Farmer*, 511 U.S. at 834). "Life's necessities include shelter, heat, clothing, sanitation, and hygiene items." *Woods v. Schmeltz*, No. 14-CV-1336, 2014 WL 7005094, at *1 (C.D. Ill. Dec. 11, 2014) (citing *Gillis v. Litscher*, 468 F.3d 488, 493 (7th Cir. 2006)); *see also Budd v. Motley*, 711 F.3d 840, 842–43 (7th Cir. 2013). Depriving a prisoner of drinkable and safe water constitutes an Eighth Amendment conditions of confinement claim. *Smith v. Dart*, 803 F.3d 304, 313 (7th Cir. 2015).

The Court does not find that Plaintiff states sufficient factual allegations to proceed against any defendants for an Eighth Amendment deliberate-indifference claim. Plaintiff alleges that the water at the jail was unsafe and exposed him to cancer; however, he does not plead facts to show that the named defendants were actually aware of this condition. Although Plaintiff generally claims that his complaints were ignored for long periods, it is unclear who the complaints were made to and whether the high-level officials named as defendants had any knowledge of Plaintiff complaints. Plaintiff's allegations as currently plead at most show negligence, but nothing indicates that the named defendants knowingly subjected Plaintiff to unsafe water. As such, the Court finds that Plaintiff fails to state an Eighth Amendment claim for deliberate indifference. As indicated, Plaintiff may state a state-law negligence claim. However, in the absence of a federal claim, the Court cannot exercise supplemental jurisdiction over a state-law

negligence claim. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1367(c); *Carlsbad Tech., Inc. v. HIF Bio, Inc.*, 556 U.S. 635, 639 (2009).

The Court will also not allow Plaintiff to proceed on a discrimination claim. Plaintiff includes no factual allegations regarding a discrimination claim, such as how he was discriminated against and the basis for the alleged discrimination. Plaintiff fails to plead factual content that allows the Court to draw the reasonable inference that any defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged. *See Ashcroft*, 556 U.S. at 678. As such, Plaintiff may not proceed on a discrimination claim.

The Court will provide Plaintiff the opportunity to file an amended complaint on or before **February 26, 2024**. When writing his amended complaint, Plaintiff should provide the Court with enough facts to answer the following questions: (1) Who violated his constitutional rights?; (2) What did each person do to violate his rights?; (3) Where did each person violate (4) When did each person violate his rights? Plaintiff's amended complaint does not need to be long or contain legal language or citations to statutes or cases, but it does need to provide the Court and each Defendant with notice of what each Defendant allegedly did or did not do to violate his rights.

The Court is enclosing a copy of its amended complaint form and instructions. Plaintiff must list all of the defendants in the caption of his amended complaint. He should use the spaces on pages two and three to allege the key facts that give rise to the claims he wishes to bring, and to describe which defendants he believes committed the violations that relate to each claim. If the space is not enough, Plaintiff may use up to five additional sheets of paper.

Plaintiff is advised that the amended complaint must bear the docket number assigned to this case and must be labeled "Amended Complaint." The amended complaint supersedes the prior complaint and must be complete in itself without reference to the original complaint. *See Duda v. Bd. of Educ. of Franklin Park Pub. Sch. Dist. No. 84*, 133 F.3d 1054, 1056 (7th Cir. 1998). In *Duda*, the appellate court emphasized that in such instances, the "prior pleading is in effect withdrawn as to all matters not restated in the amended pleading." *Id.* at 1057 (citation omitted). If the amended complaint is received, it will become the operative complaint in this action, and the Court will screen it in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

3. CONCLUSION

Accordingly,

IT IS ORDERED that Plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed without prepaying the filing fee, ECF No. 2, be and the same is hereby **GRANTED**;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Plaintiff's second motion for leave to proceed without prepaying the filing fee, ECF No. 8, be and the same is hereby **DENIED as moot**;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the complaint fails to state a federal claim;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Plaintiff may file an amended complaint that complies with the instructions in this Order on or before **February 26, 2024**. If Plaintiff files an amended complaint by the deadline, the Court will screen that complaint under 28 U.S.C. § 1915A. If Plaintiff does not file an amended complaint by the deadline, the Court will dismiss this case without prejudice based on a lack of subject-matter jurisdiction;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk's Office mail Plaintiff a blank prisoner amended complaint form and a copy of the guides entitled

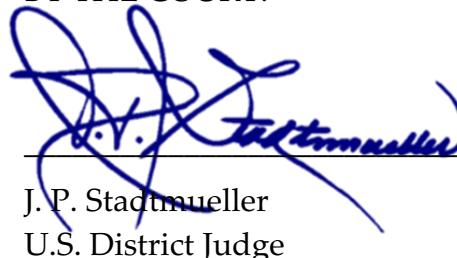
"Answers to Prisoner Litigants' Common Questions" and "Answers to Pro Se Litigants' Common Questions," along with this Order;

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the agency having custody of Plaintiff shall collect from his institution trust account the \$339.28 balance of the filing fee by collecting monthly payments from Plaintiff's prison trust account in an amount equal to 20% of the preceding month's income credited to Plaintiff's trust account and forwarding payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The payments shall be clearly identified by the case name and number assigned to this case. If Plaintiff is transferred to another county, state, or federal institution, the transferring institution shall forward a copy of this Order along with his remaining balance to the receiving institution; and

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that a copy of this Order be sent to the officer in charge of the agency where Plaintiff is confined.

Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this 5th day of February, 2024.

BY THE COURT:



J. P. Stadtmauer
U.S. District Judge

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. P. Stadtmauer", is written over a solid horizontal line. Below the line, the name "J. P. Stadtmauer" is printed in black text, followed by "U.S. District Judge" in smaller black text.

Plaintiffs who are inmates at Prisoner E-Filing Program institutions shall submit all correspondence and case filings to institution staff, who will scan and e-mail documents to the Court. Prisoner E-Filing is mandatory for all inmates at Columbia Correctional Institution, Dodge Correctional Institution, Green Bay Correctional Institution, Oshkosh Correctional Institution, Waupun Correctional Institution, and Wisconsin Secure Program Facility.

Plaintiffs who are inmates at all other prison facilities, or who have been released from custody, will be required to submit all correspondence and legal material to:

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
Eastern District of Wisconsin
362 United States Courthouse
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

DO NOT MAIL ANYTHING DIRECTLY TO THE COURT'S CHAMBERS. If mail is received directly to the Court's chambers, **IT WILL BE RETURNED TO SENDER AND WILL NOT BE FILED IN THE CASE.**

Plaintiff is further advised that failure to timely file any brief, motion, response, or reply may result in the dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute. In addition, the parties must notify the Clerk of Court of any change of address. **IF PLAINTIFF FAILS TO PROVIDE AN UPDATED ADDRESS TO THE COURT AND MAIL IS RETURNED TO THE COURT AS UNDELIVERABLE, THE COURT WILL DISMISS THIS ACTION WITHOUT PREJUDICE.**